Wednesday
1st Jan.
1941

1941

On Sunday night, as I was reading about the Great Fire, in a very accurate detailed book, London was burning & my City churches destroyed, & the Guildhall. This belongs to last year. This first day of the new year has a chill & wind - like a circular saw. Leslie H. came to lunch; said Mem - am so glad nearly Gogol. He was discussing the boundary stone of Communism, having come chiefly to hear Sir Stafford's views; then old Octavia came, with her Gossip in between; then old Octavia came, with her market woman basket. Great white bottles of milk & cream & looking at the Comet. Rather a strong moon, & so can't identify the Constellations. Mrs Coleridge Taylor tapped at the door; about a Concert: And now it's close on Cooking time. This book was salvaged from 37: I brought it down from the shop, with a handful of Elizabethans for my book, now Called "Turning a Page": A psychologist warned me that the above was written with someone, a dog, in the room. To add in pencil: I think I will let it borrow here perhaps - but what does it matter, when too many pages. No printer to consider no public.

6th Jan. A blank. All frost. Still frost. Burning white & burning blue. The Elms red. I did not mean to describe, once more, the colours in snow: but it came. And I can't help. Even now turning to bed at Ashtham down, red, purple, dove blue grey with the Crow so melodramatically "against it". Whatever the pleasure I always remember - a regret. Look for contrasts all things lovely.

Yesterday Mrs Redman was buried upside down. A mishap. Such a heavy woman, as Louie hates feastings spontaneously when the Grave - Today The burial the start whose husband now the

vision at Leaford. Then house was bombed & the bombs we heard early one morning last week. And L. is lecturing & arranging the rooms. Are these the things that are interesting? that recall that day? Yes I am so fearn. Well, all life is so fair, at my age. I mean, without much more effort I suppose to follow. And 'tother side of the hill there'll be very blue red snow. I am copying P. H. I am economising. I am to spend nothing. One day, 11 years ago I spent £2.2 on flan jars. That was the loosening of the house - & I said it was difficult. It is difficult now to be strong sight! The last change is just that but the change to the country. This Gardner notebook of Elizabeth Bowen. Small beer. But, space, silence, a time. I can set down to a book. Then I haven't done since 1924, I suppose when we went to 52: & the serious work began. Oh but I'm so tormented & the Evening beauty. & I assure you Aldeham Down is simple pink & the smoke, like lake a convoluted - should I dare say bowel? — is incandescent. Isabelle has a boy. Elaine has the measles; & to conclude the month is the colour & substance of an opaque Emerald. Many mad letters from adoring women. I never like a respect - my admirers, always my detractors. Desmond's book has come. Differ I find it small beer. Too crude, too confidential, too Hoppy & depending upon the charm of the rich voice. Yet I'm only differed; say to just my critical darkness, which went Let me define things so Cardy Bardia taken.

15th Jan.

Parsimony maybe the end of this book. Also shame at my own perversity, which comes over me when I see the 20 Eng.-books shuffled together in my room. Who am I ashamed of? Myself reading them.

I answered Edward Crisp's letter a few days, and received from him a letter which arrived just the other morning. I suppose Dorothea kindly by sneering at us. Then Joyce is dead — Joyce about a fortnight younger than I am. I remember Mrs Weaver, in wool gloves, bringing oysters in tight serpents to our teatable at Regent House. Roger I think sent her. Would we choose our lives to practising it? The indecent pages looked so incongruous: the wax apartments, ballooned up. And the pages curled with reading. I put it in the drawer of the inlaid cabinet. One day Katherine Mansfield came, & I had it out. She began to read, reluctantly: then skidding now, but there were they in their a flame that showed [illegible] I suppose in the history of literature. He was about the place, but I never saw him. Then I remember Tom in Ottoline's room at Garsington & raging — it was published then — how could anyone write again after achieving the immense prodigy of the last chapter? It was for the first time in my knowledge, rapt, cathedralic. I bought the blue paper book, & read it here one summer. I think such phases of wonder, of discovery, & then again such long lakes of intense boredom. Shanks borrowed it; raging it must be hidden from Bonnen Hawkenford. Then Joyce sank to a pre-historic world. And now ash the gents are just setting up Ulysses, & the docks. I suppose, take their place in the long procession

We were in London on Monday. I went to London Bridge. I looked at the river; very misty; some tufts of smoke, perhaps from burning houses. There was another fire on Saturday. Then I saw a cliff of wall, taken out, a stone corner: a great corner all smashed: a Bank: the Monument erect: tried to get a Bus: but such a block I dismounted; & the Lord has ordered me to walk. A complete Jam of traffic; for streets were being blown up - so I by tube to the Temple: & there wandered in the desolate ruins of my old squares: parched; dismantled: the old red brick all white powder: some like a sudden frost. Grey dust & broken windows: light trees; all that completeness wrecked & demolished. To Bazards where, for almost the first time, I decided to eat shellfish only. Turkey & pancakes. How rich, how solid. 4/- they cost. And so to the 2-2. when I collected the remains of my - let us. & heard from Mr Legg how he got over the Kitchen fire at King's.

Monday
20th.

I woke he cust. compressed. A moved like another
Back from a damp. perhaps rather dramid, visit to
Charlotte. Nena & Quentin: Adrian has almost died of
pneumonia. Nena apprehensive, en spread, when I spoke of
anglicas dirt. Leach her expeditrasche in Lewes,
Fruitless. Lecture to monas. 5 small trout for lunch.
Octavia cream. Talk & soup making. Ready
Sida - La Porta Stracte Fabii, Hatzfeldt, sentimental.
Visit from Olwen Strachey. the Stracheys Bloom.
Flogged my brain for tropes. Lighted on the war.
Conclusion over by Xmas. "And my hope is at an
end." Sent two breezy little colleagues - the share -
cutting row. Next several pages of Ptt. I laugh -
Nessa, do you find painting fits flowers? Yes. One
can do more. And money? Never think of it. And Helen?
The does nothing. I like being alone - How can one do
nothing? Duncan comes. Clive. He the same but a
somehow cheerful - G. has an offer of a draughtsman
job at Charing. Reeks then [illegible] work. The Leads
school at Lewes & behind Ann & Clive. Home a
large, tiled, swept, clamorous place. The
headmistress large, light, practical. "No one knows us
Eyot" the devil I am reading - oh all bt. for my
book. No answer from David, or Hatzfeldt Begnas.
And their letter do ten read - oh dear.

Sunday
26th. Jan.

A battle against depression, rejection (buy Harpers
my Mary & Elder Tree) Wasted today (Phoebe)
by clearing out Kitchen. by Sunday the article
(a Comedie) to N.S. & by breaking into Ptt
2 days. Think, of memoir writing.
Then through of despair shall not, I swear,
engulf me. The solitude is great. Rid well

NYPL

January

life is very small beer. The house is damp - The house is untidy. But there is no alternative. Also days will lengthen. What I need is the old heart. "For true life, like mine, is in ideas" Desmond said to me once. But one must remember one can't pump ideas. I began to dislike introspection: Slop: slackness; musing; reading: working; cycling: oh a good hard rather rocky book — yes: Herbert Fisher. That is my prescription. Lo and Gough - Cambridge in two days. I find myself tottering up my stairs here: Helen at Aldeburgh without walks: Adrian Karin: Clive at Bedford, adding up rather a higher total of happiness. There's a lull in the war. 6 nights without raids. But Garvin says the final struggle is about to come — say in 3 weeks — & every man, woman dog cat even weevil must fight their arms. Then faith — & so on. It's the cold hour, this, before the lights go up. A few snowdrops in the garden. Yes - I was thinking: we live without a future. That's what's queer. Ash over roses pressed to a closed door. Now to work, with a new nib, to Enid Jones.

Friday 7th Jan. Feb

Why was I depressed? I cannot remember. We have been to Charlie Chaplin. Like the milk girl we found it boring. I have been waiting with some slow. Mrs Hensley is to be alone before we go to Cambridge. A week of broken weather ahead. Cambridge: then Elizabeth Bowen: then Vita & Enid Jones. Helen has repaid me £25 - oh I like her better & better? I think so. The snow come back. marshes white & swamps. We were in London,

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I had to come home, owing to a bomb, by Barkey: the
Car was locked at Shaftsbury; we dined at the
White Hart — poor soup & oysters: London
streets are very empty — Oxford Street a wide
grey ribbon. My kid purse by Hole. A fine ma
Cuttle at Charles Cleeve was Stockish,
like a Bell — I said "What a Jack Ness can
marry him!" The Edwards are Money
Merchants & live in the Law Courts — Theirs is
Respectable but delightful. And what else?
Very affable ladies like N.S. The Graham are
flying. The 3rd week in March is fixed for
Lucknow. Now black out, & perhaps work to
Mary — No I think read — what? I must
tune up Bonney Elizabethan.

Sunday 16th Feb.

In the wild grey weather after last week's turmoil.
I liked the dinner with dark lights & Confidential. I liked the soft grey night — at
Kelvedon — the Council Room in the high
Ceremonial room, all polished & spectatorial.
The was in sort red & blacks. We sat by a bright fire.
Lucknow Stitching talk. The Leaves next year.
Then Letchworth — the Raven Chained to their
Typewriters — their drawn at fates, & the
Madness — the malignant man, more
Competent machines folders. Stamps. Glueing
& unsympathetic books. They can stamps date &
metallic leather. One Pen is up in a flame & Care.
No country to look at. very long train journeys.
Food Rumbey. No butter no jam. Old couples
hoarding marmalade & shape nuts with
Cattle. Conversation half whispered round the large fire.
Eh Bowen arrived two hours after we got back. &
went perhaps: & nervous bits: then bed: then
perhaps I shall re-enter one day higher here. But
not yet.

NYPL

Wed 26th Feb.

Mrs 'higher life' is almost entirely the Elizabethan play. Finished Pointz Hall, the Pageant: the play - finally. Between the Acts this morning. Flora & Molly have just gone: leaving me back the bitter August spring day, why they came?

Yesterday in the Ladies Lavatory at the Sussex Hall at Brighton I heard:

She's a little simpering thing. I don't like that her. But then he never did care for big women.

(So he Bert) Her eyes are so blue - like little blue hools. Lo'y Jerks. She has the same eyes - only her teeth back a little. He has wonderful white teeth - He always had. He'll be court martialled.

They were bowdering & brushing. Three common little tarts, while I sat, behind a thin door, p-ing as secretly as I could.

Then at Fullers. A fat, smart woman, in red hunting cap, beads, check skirt, consuming rich cakes. Her shabby dependant also stuffing. Hudson ran unloading biscuit opposite. The fat woman had a Coache large white moffen face. Other was shabby Grille. They ate & ate. Talked about Mary. But this very ch, Jr. But have to wh he. Dowr the only one... why should she be? ... I shrunk the marmalade but John doesn't like it - And we have two pressed on biscuits in the tin upstairs... Something seedy, shabby, parasitic about them. Then they bolted up cakes. And passed the time o' day with the waiters. Where does the money come to feed these fat white slugs? Brighton a low comer for slugs. The powdered the pampered the unlodg improps. I imitated them in a large home in Sussex Jr. We cycled. Imitated as usual & Mc-

Washing of Peacham. Helen has fallen through,

I mean the horrors I forgot with Enid Jones. The
days Enid launched here, with Kitty: & I felt so
unlucky yet cool; & the edges & battle. No
walks for even so long. People daily. And
rather a Chaos in my mind. And some blank
spaces. Food becomes an obsession I suppose
Jenny away a Pisa Inn. Sorrows — age, or the war?
Never mind. Adventures. Make Solid. But shall I
Ever write again one of those tenderer that gives me
intense pleasure? There is no echo in Rodmell — only
waste air. I went the afternoon of the School,
marbling hopes. Mrs W: discontented. —
Sad, Mrs, no life in these children. Contrary
them with Londoners, then wheeling my own
Comment upon that long languid meeting
at Charleston. No life: & so they cling to us.
That is my conclusion. We pay the penalty for
our rung in society by infernal boredom.

Sh Mart. Just back from Lewes at Bugatti. It
Looks a foreign town: the first spring day.
Some wives in hats. A wealthy hat in a
tea shop — how fashion leaves the age!
And the shell encrusted old women, rouged,
Jacked, cadaverous at the tea shop.
The waitress in checked cotton.
No: I intend no introspection. I mark
Henry James's lectures: Observe perpetually.
Observe the outcome of age. Observe greed.
Observe my own dependency. Be that
means it becomes serviceable. Or so I
hope. I insist upon spending this time
to the best advantage. I will go
down with my colours flying.

NYPL

I see verges an introspection; but dreams just fall in.
Suppose, I bought a ticket at the Museum
& liked in daily & read history. Suppose I
selected one dominant figure in every
age & wrote round & about. Decapatem is
essential. And now with some pleasure I
find that it lies; & must cook dinner.
Haddock & sausage meat. I think that the
best one sees a Cartoon bird on sausage.
haddock by washing them down. Last night I
analysed to L. my London library complex.
That sudden fever has vanished; now I'm
plucked at by the H Hamilton lunch that I
refused. To right the balance, I wrote to
Stephen & Tom: & will write to Ethel &
invite myself to stay: & then to Miss Sharp
who presented me with a bunch of
violets. Then I make up for the right way
Oxford Street & Piccadilly which haunt me.
Oh dear Oh. I shall conquer this mood.
It's a question of being open study, wide eyed
& present. Letting things come one after
another how to cook the haddock.

BTPL

March 24th

He had a face like the duke of Wellington & great hooked nose & cold prominent eyes. When we came in the man sitting perched on a 3 cornered chair work knitting in his hand. An arrow fastened his collar. And before 5 minutes had passed he had told us that two of his sons had been killed in the war. This, one felt, was to his credit. He was taught dressmaking. Everything in the room was red brown & glossy. Letting there I tried to coin a few compliments. But they perished in the icy sea between us. And then there was nothing.

A carriage was side saddle in the air today. It reminds me of ladies in a parade at Easter. Eugene leaning against the wind, hipped & silenced. All hot pulp removed.

This windy corner. And here is old Bagshaw — I am imagining how it will be if we could ensure rain.

Debare air thing. Could I explode it somehow?

English proofs in 10 days.

Have two letters from Shena — O. I cant tackle them, yet enjoy having them:

L. is doing the rhododendrons.

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NATTY 300/6

SERIES PLAIN

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Subject

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